

A TRIBUTE.

ELIZABETH STANTON PHELPS.
Blinded I groped—you gave me sight.
Perplexed I turned—you sent me light.
You speak unto a thousand ears:
I pay you tribute in hid tears.
I pay you homage in the hopes
That rise to scale life's scathed slopes.
I give you gratitude in this:
That midway on the precipice
You never told and never saw,
When air you never drank, strikes raw
And woe you never passed, gave death
And gnaw you never sawed, gave death
And crags you gained some sunlit way,
From threatening over me to day,
That here with bread and hand I cling,
Because I heard you younger sing
With those who conquer. If through joy
Then deeper be my shame who try
And later in the coming days,
I ought and not pass by strength of pain.
Laggard led, I reach to bless
You who are kind of happiness:
You are the living, not the dead,
Who could not stoop to be slave,
Downward to me, reeking, fling
My privilege of suffering.
I take and listen. Teach me, see!
Nearer than you, I ought to be:
Nearer the height man never trod,
Nearer the velvet foot of God,
I ought and am not. "Conrad be!
Unconscious captain unto me,
Unknown, becalm and command:
I answer you with unadorned
You read in vain these lines between,
And smiling, wonder whom I mean.

THE STORM.

As men's cheeks faded
On shores invaded,
When shoreward waded
The lords of flight;
When churl and craven
Saw hat and sword
The white-winged raven
At midnight height;
When monks afflicted
To witness sight:
The birds full-flighted
Of swift sea-skins;
So swift their talons
When storm the sailor
Steers in the race of his wings
O strong sea-sailor,
Whose cheek turns pale
For wind or hail
O, far-sea-farer,
O, thunder-bearer,
Thou flocks are rarer
Than sea-songs,
O, fleet-foot stranger,
O, north-sea ranger,
Through days of danger
And ways of fear
Blow thy horn here for us,
Blow the sky clear for us,
Send us the song of the sea to the shore.
—Stevenson.

HER HOLIDAY.

A HUSBAND'S STORY.
Yes, it was to be her holiday—"all for her." Nobody else was to have any share in it except myself—that is, if going as her courier, paymaster, and general factotum, could be called having a share in a holiday.
We had been married nearly ten years, and what with the cares of home and the training of numerous odd branches, she had never had a day of rest. Of course, we had been to the sea-side frequently, and all sort of thing; but then, surrounded by children and nurses, these trips had only been a continuation of the general London responsibilities, plus the worries and inconvenience of lodgings or hotels. Moreover, within the last few years there had been some trouble in her family, which had acted very prejudicially upon her sensitive and high-strung nature. So now we were going away alone—going to leave all the children at home in the charge of grandmothers—were going abroad for six weeks together wherever she pleased. Her will was to be paramount; I was to be her slave—to pay the bills and look after the luggage. Her affection and untiring devotion to her duties deserved no less. She had thoroughly qualified herself for enjoying a holiday; she had earned it. "Italy," she said, "where there is sunlight, beauty, and quiet." Good! I waived my magnetic wand, rubbed the lamp, or spread the carpet, or did any sensitive and wonderful things which neocompurers of yore were wont to do when desiring to be transported to distant places—or, rather, I resorted to the modern golden equivalent for such proceedings—and we went, ourselves certainly, as if by magic, at Lucerne. There we were to take it easy, and so jogged along over the St. Gothard Pass, and dropped into Italy at the Locarno end of the Lago Maggiore.
By this time she was beginning to enjoy herself thoroughly; she had got over the fatigue, and already looked much as she did the day I married her. Yes, it was very delightful to see her so well and happy.
"Why, it is like a honeymoon over again," she said; "or rather it is as if there had been no break, and that it was only the continuation of those early days."
We spent hours and hours upon the lake, beneath the awnings of the flat-bottomed boats, those first inceptions of the gondola, or we wandered up to the picturesque old convent or sanctuary of the Madonna del Sasso, set like a jewel amid the blue hills behind the town.
And there in the soft autumn evenings we sat and watched the glorious sunset, and the boundless panoramas of Alp, plain, and lake, while the bell in the campanile hard by called the peasantry to vespers, and the pealing of the deep-toned organ resounded through the choir.
We selected Locarno as a halting place, because it was at that time, and is so partly still, out of the rush of the tourist. A primitive place, with simple, civil people, willing to serve and oblige honestly, and without having for the first question in their minds, "What shall we get by it?" Thus we came to know some of them living up there near the sanctuary, and to speak or nod when we met from time to time.
Notably among these was a mother and child—a sweet little chubby cherub of a boy about five. The Italian folk in the north there are not as a rule handsome, but this mother was an exception and the child was like her. Superior, too, in all respects, she looked better born, bred, and nurtured; nay, there was even a look of culture and refinement about her.
Innumerable attracted by this pair, my wife particularly would lose no opportunity of giving the little one a pat and a kiss, and of exchanging a pleasant word or two in the best Italian she could muster with the mother, who by degrees on her part began to speak a little English, and to take us into her confidence. She explained that she had married an Englishman, a gentleman, she declared, who had died suddenly, more than four years ago,

and just before the little one was born. His family never knew of the marriage; he had intended, she said, to proclaim it, and face the consequences of the *mesalliance*, as it should be called; but his sudden death prevented this, and to this day she believed her existence even was unknown to her husband's people. But she did not care; he had left her just enough to live upon; and had come to dwell at Locarno, where her aged father lived, and whose last days she desired to soothe. She was contented with the humble life she led there in yonder little wooden chalet—at least, until the good God should take him to his rest.
Would we enter the abode and speak to her father? He was a very handsome old man, a native of Tuscany, who had seen better days. *Fai* it mattered little that, or why he had come so far north.
Her name, we asked.
Ah, her maiden name was one that in past times had struck terror to the foes of Italy; she would rather not mention it. Her father, even, had considered it wise to drop it, and had adopted her surname, her married name, the name of her husband, that is.
What had he taken an English name? No, not an English name; her husband had changed his name for reasons—they did not signify; and he was known as Giorgio Vianero, she was Lucia.
Of course, we went in and spoke to the old farmer-like man, who, partially paralyzed, always sat by the window of his neat little house. He received us with the grace of a prince, regretted that his infirmities prevented him from doing the honors of the neighborhood, so beautiful as it was.
Naturally we looked in upon him more than once, but still it was his grandchild that was the attraction. His wife declared that little Paolo was the veriest darling she had ever seen, that he reminded her of her youngest, and that she should like to carry him off, probably because we had not enough of our own.
Now, she was a woman not given to morbid fancies, thoroughly healthy, with plenty of common sense. So I was a little surprised at this extravagant admiration, and to hear her say that the child bore a resemblance to ours. I could see none; but it was "her holiday," and she was not to be crossed.
Well, if I was surprised by this, judge how much more so was I when she suddenly one morning announced her wish to return home.
"We have not been away three weeks," I mildly protested.
"No," she said; "but I have got a strange longing for the children; I can't bear to be away from them any longer. I never have been away from them two days, much less two weeks, before, and I can't bear it. I must go back."
"All right," she said, "your pretty little protegee on the hill up there?" I ventured to say.
"Yes," she answered, "that is the reason, that is what has made me wish to see her. I have got a strange longing for her. I love her child makes me envious; I want to be with my own."
What could I say? It was her holiday, to do as she pleased with; if I pleaded to cut it short, she would not listen.
"We will be off to-night, love," I said; but inwardly I was grieved, saddened, not only by the disappointment, but because, seeing that we had excellent accounts from the level of the lake, and the precipice itself just there was some forty feet above the river. A few rough bushes made a feeble parapet on the broken ground at the actual edge, but beyond that there was nothing but a sheer down wall of rock. As we reached this corner we saw fluttering in the wind what looked at first like a handkerchief hanging from one of the bushes, but which proved at last to be the skirt of a woman, and a child who was standing at the very verge of the chasm.
"How dangerous!" exclaimed my wife. "Who can have let a child in such a place?"
It was a solitary walk this, especially at midday, and we had not met a creature since we cleared the outskirts of the town, except an old monk tottering down upon some mundane errand.
"What a lonely place! we got still nearer."
"Why it is—yes, I declare—why, it is dear little Paolo himself. Good gracious! he has strayed away down here alone to look for blackberries, no doubt," and as she spoke she rushed forward, and seizing the child by the skirt drew it back from the perilous edge over which it was crawling. As I came up we both saw that the little creature was crying bitterly, and he immediately began pointing towards the stream, and liping out, "Mia madre, mia madre!"
I bent over and looked down in the direction the little one was pointing, and to my dismay I saw rocks at the verge of the river bed, lying prostrate thirty feet below, the motionless form of the mother.
Then ensued a scene which I will not dwell upon. I flew up to the sanctuary for assistance. My wife, clasping the little one in her arms, hastened down to the place where it was just possible, by a very rough scramble, to get round to the bed of the river. Here I, and those whom I brought with me, presently found her. She was not dead, but quite insensible, and after infinite trouble and care we managed to carry her up to her home, my wife, with Paolo in her arms, proceeding, and breaking the sad news to the father.
The only sort of medical aid obtainable in that primitive place came from the sanctuary, and soon an old monk to whom we made our way to defer, was in attendance, and after a careful examination of the patient pronounced that, by a great mercy, no bones were broken, but that the poor woman was suffering from concussion of the brain, and that some

weeks might elapse before she would be about again.
"Do you still hold to your determination of returning home?" I said to my wife, when the excitement and the sorrow which this catastrophe had caused were a little abated; for I own I was selfish enough to hope that out of this evil might come in the shape of making her prolong her holiday. The hope was realized.
"No," she answered; "perhaps I can be of some use here; I will not go back yet. This little one will want a mother's care now; I will be that mother, for I love him more than ever, and I wish more than ever that he belonged to me."
I need hardly say that under other circumstances I should have entirely objected her assuming such maternal responsibilities, that she should have pointed out that it was no duty of hers, a well-born lady, in this fashion to look after the offspring of an unknown peasant woman, and that there were plenty of neighbors willing and ready to undertake the task, and who were really the proper people, etc.
But what could I do? Was it not "her holiday?" and had I not promised a hundred times to conform to her every wish, whim, or caprice?—because I thought she had none, and I never expected to be put to this kind of test, for had I not married a sensible woman? I was puzzled, but I could only conform, saying myself, "They are strange creatures, women; no one ever knows them"—no, not after ten years of the closest intimacy.
So we staid on; she devoting the greater part of her time to attendance upon the sick woman (who still lay unconscious) and her child, whose liping and imperfect words had told us too plainly that it was while stretching over the edge of the precipice to gather blackberries for him, that his mother had lost her footing and fallen headlong down. My wife would spend hours by the bedside. I ventured to remonstrate, and got a severe snubbing for my pains.
One evening, about a week after the catastrophe, while I was waiting for her at a spot hard by the sanctuary where we often sat, she came up to me in the most excited frame of mind. I was really alarmed; I had never seen her so excited, and she was so pale.
"O, Walter," she exclaimed, "I have just come from the poor woman, and I have had such a shock!" She has regained consciousness, but not her senses, which the good fate, who watches her always, tells me frequently happens in such cases.
"What of that? Why should it excite you so?" I asked, quivering at my wife's words.
"Ah, I don't know! I cannot tell you; my hopes, my beliefs, have hardly taken form yet; only come quickly with me up to the house, and you shall see for yourself. Come, let us get on faster; I want to go back to that you and I both may listen to Lucia Vianero's broken words, prove their meaning, and so clear up a doubt that!"
"What do you mean?" I cried.
"Can she have said so strangely worded you?" and I inwardly thought, "O that I had never consented to 'her holiday!'"
I will tell you, if you will only hurry on as fast as you can. Signs of animation set in about an hour ago, and the first words were, "Paolo, Paolo!" I held the boy up to her, but she took no heed of him, and went on murmuring another name, "O, Walter, it is all so wonderful! I feel quite mysteriously affected. It is, but here, reaching the door of the chalet, my wife hurried me to the bedside.
"The old monk held up a warning finger as we entered; we had dared to draw breath as we listened to Lucia's low, unconscious tones.
"Giorgio, Giorgio mio," she was saying, in Italian, like one who talks in a dream, "never can I forget the name, I will not love me; they will neglect me. Hide it, and the little one too; do not let them see him; they would break his heart with coldness; they would not even own him! Yes, perhaps your sister might, for she loved you, Giorgio mio; you have told me so. She felt for you and wept for you, and knew why you went away and came to live in the midst of sunny skies and beautiful waters. Ever and anon she would tell you, she would love Paolo for your sake. Look at him, Giorgio, Kiss him!"
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JOHN HODGE, Sec'y.

